

Virginia WILDLIFE

APRIL, 1953



VOLUME XIV

Price 15 cents

NUMBER 4



V. S. C. C. photo by Flourney

Landmark of History

Cape Henry guards the east shore of the Old Dominion. Here the first English colonists landed in April in 1607 to begin Virginia's dramatic history and start the makings of a great empire based on outdoor wealth

Virginia WILDLIFE

Published by VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES, Richmond 13, Virginia

A Monthly Magazine Dedicated to the Conservation, Restoration, and Wise Use of Virginia's Wildlife and Related Natural Resources, and to the Betterment of Hunting and Fishing in Virginia

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



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Cover

A young least bittern takes a cautious step across a weathered drift-wood snag, in search of an unsuspecting minnow, frog, or insect to satisfy his insatiable appetite

Commission photo by Kesteloo

PUBLICATION OFFICE: Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North Second Street, Richmond 13, Virginia

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: One Year, \$1.00; two years, \$1.50; three years, \$2.00. Remittances by check or money order to be made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia. Local game wardens will accept subscriptions or they may be forwarded direct to Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North Second Street, Richmond 13, Virginia.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE is published monthly at Richmond 13, Virginia, by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North Second Street. All magazine subscriptions, change of address notices, and inquiries should be sent to VIRGINIA WILDLIFE, P. O. Box 1642, Richmond Virginia. The editorial office gratefully receives for publication all news items, articles, photographs, sketches, and other materials which deal with the wise use and management and study of Virginia's inter-related, renewable resources: soils, water, forests and wildlife. Since wildlife is a beneficiary of the work done by state and federal land-use agencies in Virginia, editorial policy provides for full recognition of their accomplishments and solicitations of their contributions. Credit is given on material published. Permission to reprint is granted provided proper credit is given the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and VIRGINIA WILDLIFE and proper clearances are made with authors, photographers, artists and publishers.

Entered as a second class mail matter, November 10, 1947, at the post office in Richmond, Virginia, under the act of August 24, 1912

"As The Twig is Bent . . ."

By BARBARA BEATTIE FANNEY
Publicist, Education Division

AS I SAT at my desk one day several weeks ago, glancing wistfully out at the dancing spring sunshine, a rather pathetic scene kept running through my mind.

Recently, on a trip to New York City, I had watched a dirty-faced, scrawny little kid, clutching two rosy apples in a grimy paw, jump out of the reach of an Italian sidewalk storekeeper. With a devilish glint in his eyes and his tongue wagging impishly at the angry man, he had scampered away down the narrow, debris-littered street to hide away and eat his hard-gained loot.

As I literally ached for the out-of-doors, my mind was consumed with the problem of dirty little boys like the one I had seen in New York. Suddenly, the mounds of "important" letters on my desk became unimportant. I wanted to get out into the warming sun which pushed insistently "in folds of golden fulness at my door." I yearned to stretch in the sun, to breathe in deep, vibrant draughts of clean air. As I mused thoughtfully, it occurred to me that spring had gotten into that child's blood, too, but he had had no outlet for his exuberant spirits. My thoughts jumped away to the plump, rosy-cheeked Boy Scouts preparing for hikes through budding woods to learn the lore of nature by first hand experience. What a heart-aching contrast!

The unfortunate shum-bred child was likely to go from petty thievery to full-scale crime—living off society by the fruits of his stealing. Whereas, the boy and girl scouts, the 4-H'ers and the like, happily engaged in hunting and fishing, and constructive outdoor pastimes, would gradually grow into the staunch citizens of tomorrow—"As the twig is bent . . .!"

Organized sports, nature hikes, and studies give these children an outlet for the youthful energies which rise to the fore in the spring. Nature handbooks full of wonderful things to do in the outdoors, such as the one prepared for the Boy Scouts, guide the energies of these children toward character-building activities, leaving no time for mischievous deeds which sooner or later may lead to crime. Here again the "twig is being bent" toward a useful, purposeful life.

It made my heart sick to think of the other side of the picture—of the many, many children cooped up in tenement houses, knowing only the light and darkness of day changing into night. These children have seldom seen the dawning of a spring day when the newborn rays of the sun peep through the clouds, caressing the world below. Living in dark cities, many of our nation's children are missing the true heritage of a wonderful God-given land. They have never seen the beauty of a woodland as it awakes under the gentle hand of spring. They have never known the calm, soothing quiet of a rustic country lane. Theirs is the life of the noise, hustle and confusion of the "big city" avenue. They have never witnessed the "face of all the world changed"

as "comes the fresh spring in all her green completed."

Pondering the problem of hapless, delinquent children, I realized that our problem of conservation is directly connected. Children must be taught right from wrong. Children must be taught conservation. But neither of these teaching jobs is an easy one. A child doesn't instinctively know the value of the soil upon which he treads. He doesn't know that a certain species of bird or game may become extinct unless preventive measures are taken to protect them.

When we teach children how to build a birdhouse and feed the birds, how to hook a bream on light tackle, how to recognize a fox from its footprints, at the same time we are giving them an outlet for those youthful energies which, when left unchanneled, may lead to lives of crime.

Charles Horn, president of a large manufacturing company, once made the remark that "conservation as taught to the youth of our country is our only hope . . . as we grow older our minds are fixed, and we change slowly and accept new ideas reluctantly . . . Therefore, we must look to the boys and girls . . . to help us in saving our natural resources." Similarly, we must give our children outlets for their energies to lead them on the right path and prevent them from drifting into the wrong.

God made nature with its profound influence on our lives and characters. With just a little help from mom and dad, youngsters can be given the opportunity to examine wildlife in its native niche, to be inspired by nature as have been many of the greatest contributors to human welfare.

You dads take a week-end and spend the time teaching your son to shoot a rifle safely and correctly—to hook a crappie—to learn the ways of the woods. You mothers show your daughters the delights of identifying wild flowers and making color slides—listening to songbirds—watching a chipmunk as he stores nuts for the winter. If you don't already know this enjoyment yourselves, you can learn with your children. This world is our children's world. They must learn its problems to prepare themselves for life in the community as good citizens. Hours of delightful enjoyment can be spent in the woodland on projects which are outwardly "fun" but basically educational.

Children are naturally inquisitive, naturally exuberant creatures. We must guide their activities so as to teach them that they are "partners with nature," that God has put every plant, every living creature on this earth for a purpose.

This world is God's temple. Let's help our children sanctify it by "bending the twigs of their lives" into wholesome expressions of praise for their wonderful heritage. Let's keep them from the shadowy walks of life and bring them into the open enjoyment of this world and "all that is therein."



Commission photo by Kesteloo

LANDOWNER-SPORTSMEN RELATIONSHIPS

By A. H. ANDERSON

Supervisor, George Washington National Forest

A FISHERMAN, hunter or landowner might well ask the question—what interest does the George Washington National Forest in Virginia have in landowner-sportsmen relationships? The question can be easily answered.

The two national forests in Virginia, George Washington and Jefferson, comprise 1,413,000 acres of publicly-owned land which are open to all hunters and fishermen. In many instances, access to this publicly-owned land is across privately-owned tracts. If travel across his land is prohibited by the landowner, there will be many thousands of acres of good hunting and fishing territory that the sportsmen of Virginia and their guests cannot use.

I feel that it is high time that an inventory be taken of the present hunting grounds that are open to public use. If such a survey were made, the results would awaken the thousands of Virginia sportsmen to what is happening to their "happy hunting and fishing ground"

and perhaps move them to constructive activity.

Every sportsman within the past several years has been confronted with the same downward trend of open hunting grounds. Virginia is not the only state with this problem.

The blame for the existing deterioration of relationships must be shared equally by landowners and sportsmen. The common objective of landowners, sportsmen, and agencies engaged in wildlife management is to determine the cause of the problem with which we are confronted, and next, to correct it if at all possible.

We will agree that the major reason for posting of private land against the general public is, in the last analysis, vandalism, committed by a minority of hunters, either wantonly or thoughtlessly. Through the years, vandalism has increased in an alarming flood and with it more and more landowners have posted their lands. This serves to restrict the law-abiding hunters from enjoying such lands unless they are granted permission



Commission photo by Kesteloo

Trout fishermen, trespassing upon posted lands, have caused many miles of streams to remain closed to public fishing



V. S. C. C. photo by Flournoy

Climbing over fences has led to more posted lands and fewer acres of hunting and fishing lands and waters



V. S. C. C. photo by Flournoy

Leaving gates open for stock to roam free is another way of straining farmer-sportsmen relations

to hunt on the posted areas. In many cases, when a landowner becomes angry enough to post his land, he will not permit hunters, good or bad, on his property, if he can prevent it. But some of the persons who have caused the land to be posted care little and have no respect for "keep-off" signs. They sneak in and kill game and sneak away before the owner can intercept them. In fact, posted land becomes their private hunting domain.

There are many thousands of law-abiding sportsmen who are not personally familiar with acts of vandalism done on private land. If they were familiar with such acts, I am sure they would do everything possible to prevent them. Livestock has been shot, pasture gates left open, fences broken down, trees destroyed, game burrows dug out, cultivated fields trampled down, etc. This is only a partial list. Can you blame a landowner for posting his land when repeated acts of vandalism, intentional or otherwise, have caused him damage and trouble?

There is another angle to this problem. The landowner has something that the hunter and fisherman want. He owns or controls the land on which the game lives and which supplies the food and shelter for this game. Even though courts have ruled that the game is owned by the state and must be harvested in accordance with state laws and regulations, the landowner can nullify any harvest of game by posting his land to hunters. This also means that the landowner, if he so desires, can decide who shall hunt and fish on his land. In view of this, isn't there an immediate pressing need for the sportsmen themselves to better their relationships with landowners in the area in which they hunt or fish?

Increasing acreage of posted lands is also contributing to reduction of availability of publicly-owned lands for hunting and fishing. On both national forests in Virginia there are many areas where the lands are in the foothills and main mountain range. Access to these areas is through private land, by trail or by road. Closing of this private land to use or travel literally "locks up" the public land. Many organized sportsmen's groups have acquired control of land, either by purchase or lease, which in the past afforded access to national forest lands. They also are contributing to reducing the amount of public-owned land for hunting.

The Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Virginia Forest Service are concerned about this problem. It has a direct effect on the co-operative wildlife program on the two national forests which the sportsmen, through their license fees, are financing.

In order to enlist the support of the landowner and reverse the trend on posted lands, a definite program pointing to better landowner-sportsmen relationship will have to be undertaken. Sportsmen themselves will have to take a leading part in any such plan. It is going to take the combined co-operation of all landowners, sportsmen and conservation agencies to achieve

better hunting and fishing in Virginia. Several suggestions on how this may be done follow:

1. Violations occur not from the true sportsmen, but from violators and cheats who think they are sportsmen. Some are also traceable to sportsmen who are essentially sound but thoughtless or careless. These will have to be exposed for the good of our hunting and fishing. This is not an impossible task if all sportsmen co-operate by reporting violations to the landowner or law officer. Let's all help to decrease heedless trespass on private land and violations of the inherent rights of landowner—also, game and fish law violations.
2. Organized clubs could well afford to sponsor a program of education pointing out the need for better understanding among landowners and hunters and fishermen. Treat the landowners better. How about asking farmers to attend club meetings to discuss the problem? Always ask permission before going on their land. Using an old expression, "Don't ride a good horse to death."
3. Sportsmen clubs and even individuals can help the game management program by assisting conservation agencies and landowners in their development work. I feel that this would assist in creating better feeling between the landowner and the sportsmen.
Such assistance should give a hunter a feeling of "well done." He has done something for the "cause." The landowner will feel that the hunter is showing his interest by contributing to production of game. Ordinarily, the hunter is interested only in the harvest. Why should the landowner develop his lands for wildlife for benefit of the hunter if he does not himself hunt?

4. Landowners (farmers, sportsmen clubs and others) who control land between national forest land and public roads, for one reason or another, may not want to open their land to the general public for hunting. In such cases, why not make available a pass-way for the general public so that they can get to national forest land?
5. Sportsmen do not receive all of the benefits in harvesting our wildlife crop. Perhaps landowners would be more tolerant if they realized the number of dollars that were dropped in their locality by hunters and fishermen in the course of a year. The landowner himself may not directly benefit, but indirectly he does in one way or another. There are many instances when wildlife enhances the value of the land. More money in circulation in a community means better times for those residing in the area.

The above are only a few suggestions which, if carried out, would materially assist in obtaining a better understanding between the landowner and sportsmen. There are many more. This problem is not an insurmountable one. It can be licked with the active co-operation of all concerned.



Commission photo by Kesteloo

Training youth in clean outdoor living will insure us of a generation of conservation minded citizens



U. S. Forest Service photo

Leaving the camp grounds clean and neat is a sure way to be invited back for future outings at your favorite camp site



Photo courtesy Indiana Coal Producers Association

The planting of trees and shrubs for timber and wildlife on future hunting grounds is a project worthy of any true sportsman



Fish Are Where You Find Them

By KENNEDY LUDLAM

Outdoor Editor, Washington Times Herald

SO MUCH has been written about where the well-mannered fish of orthodox habits should be found, that I think it's time for somebody to talk about the places where no fish in his right mind would ever go—and about the fish that have been caught out of such places.

Let's go back about umpty years to the time when yours truly was a rosy-cheeked cherub of ten years, already well-inoculated with the Waltonian virns. We used to spend our summers in the pleasant Vermont village of Manchester, and like most folk whose ancestors came from such towns, we were most proud of the beautifully manicured cemetery in the soft sod of which rested the remains of numbers of the town's forefathers—including my grandfather.

At that time my fishing ambitions soared no higher than to come home with half a dozen or so three-inch minnows locally known as daec; ever to achieve the piscatorial heights of my two uncles, whose walls were covered with monster trout trophies, never entered my mind.

The cemetery was adjacent to our cottage, but no questions were ever asked when I fared forth armed with rod, hooks, and succulent worms from the back-yard. A brook which wandered through the peaceful lawns of the cemetery never broadened to more than three feet except when it became confined in beautifully landscaped pools, cement bordered, and lapping at the feet of some impressive mausoleum. Sometimes in the

faster parts of the stream, the water got to be almost six inches deep. Owing to the attitude of the unsympathetic caretakers, my activities were confined to the narrower parts of the brook, and there I industriously dunked my worms and landed my minnows. One never-to-be-forgotten day in mid-July, I was happily tromping along the smooth turf banks of the little brook, hopefully dropping in my worm from time to time. Suddenly, spattering water into my wide-open mouth, an enormous and highly indignant trout tried to make away with my bait. Purely by reflex action, I yanked the line, and because there was no room for him to go anywhere else, the trout came out on the bank. I was stuttering with excitement, and hardly able to get home fast enough to show off my prize. Father and Mother were out, but my older brother—no fisherman, but nevertheless interested in my catch—helped me clean the monster and weigh him. He turned the scales at a pound and a half. Not a bad catch for a ten-year-old, and nothing would do but that the fish be cooked for Father's supper, and so it came to pass. Much to my annoyance, the family was far more concerned with my veracity in regard to the actual catching of the trout than they were with the fish itself, and no questions were forthcoming about the location of the catch until Father had swallowed several large, delicious mouthfuls. Finally it came. "Where did you catch him?" asked my mother. There was nothing unusual about it as far as I was concerned. "Out of the

brook in the cemetery right below Grandfather's grave!" And I have never to this day realized why Father should become violently ill, and why I was forbidden to fish in the cemetery any more.

The years passed, but I still didn't become sufficiently orthodox to fish entirely by the book. During one summer, I was visiting my uncle who belonged to a club in Pennsylvania's Pike County—a famous bass country which almost every year in those days produced a record fish or two. Uncle Bill owned a somewhat elaborate cottage with a series of terraced pools made from a rivulet which came down the mountain on its way to the lake. The pools were almost three feet deep in the center and thoroughly dammed at each end. The spillways from terrace to terrace were no more than trickles. Anxious to try out a new rod acquired through avuncular generosity, I was casting a jointed pikie minnow out into the pool. After about ten minutes or so of practice, I tried to cast all the way across the water for distance. Result: backlash. While I was untangling the "birdsnest," a three-pound smallmouth came out of nowhere and smashed the plug as it floated on the water. I landed him all right, but if there hadn't been witnesses, no one would ever have believed that the fish came from that pool.

Turning to trout again, by this time I had read many books, and my fishing technique was definitely tending to the orthodox and conservative. My father had retired to Vermont, but this time it was to a house in the little village of East Dorset, through which ran a pretty mountain stream called Mad Tom. Mad Tom was full of fingerling trout, most of them under the six inch limit, but there were enough eight and ten inchers to make whipping it with a flyrod occasionally very much worth-while. To reach this stream, one had to cross a rather rough pasture and a very small tributary—even smaller than the cemetery brook. My father was with me this time, and when we reached the footbridge across the little bitty brook, he decided to sit down and rest. I went on to the main stream and started casting. After an hour or two, I came back to find Dad dozing peacefully, his back against a tree, his line in the water. Working the old gag, I hollered at him, "Hey, wake up. Dad! You've got a fish!" With a snort and a gurgle, the old gentleman came back from the land of nod, yanked in his line, and landed as pretty a 15-inch rainbow as you'd care to see, neatly hooked through the upper lip by a No. 16 Shoemaker! And this from water you couldn't hide a cocktail glass in!

During the time I was at school at Andover, I utilized most of my Wednesday and Saturday half-holidays in the season fishing in the Shawsheen River which flowed within a mile or two of the school campus. The Shawsheen is one of those typical New England rivers from which a number of mills derive electric power by virtue of occasional dams. To me, water meant possible fish, and I used to work the stream thoroughly week after week. Now, dams and heavy industry, together with pollution, don't as a rule make for trout fishing, but nobody had ever told me anything about this, so I was

the only one who wasn't surprised all to pieces when I came home one evening with three good-sized pickerel, a 12-inch bass . . . and a two-pound speckled trout! It was the first seen in that part of the country for 20 years. The local paper made quite a fuss about it, and for the next several weeks the river banks were lined with hopeful fishermen, but nobody caught another trout, and as far as I know, no trout has been caught in that river since then.

Time marched on and I was lucky enough to marry a delightful young lady who took to fishing and the outdoors as if she'd been born to it. She learned to cast in 20 minutes, and I was proud to have my prized three-ounce Orvis rod pass into such hands. Summer vacations turned into fishing trips, and we covered eastern Canada, New England, the North Central States, and the Northwest in search of trout, bass, and northern pike. Eventually our travels brought us to Arkville, New York, where in my youth I used to try to lure smart brownies from the east branch of the Delaware River. By this time I fished entirely by the book, working only likely-looking water, using dry flies exclusively, and carrying untold pounds of gear draped in various inartistic spots on my person. Glen was wiser. She had me carry her stuff—including the net—and she usually hung around pools and places easy of access. Me? I waded the brook and braved the torrent.

There's a place on the stream just before one gets into Arkville on the Kingston Road where there's an old mill dam. The pond above the dam is shallow and full of suckers, but the riffles under the spillway generally produce a couple of good size trout ever so often. It takes a bit of wading, though, 'cause the rocks are slippery, and the water is plenty strong. Glen doesn't like wading in heavy water, and this particular time, she was sitting on the narrow wooden flume that paralleled the brook for a few yards below the dam. It might have been 12 inches wide and a couple of feet deep, open at the top with cleats nailed across every five feet to hold the walls together. I worked the water below the dam for quite a while with nary a strike, and finally splashed over to where Glen was resting.

"No luck?" she asked.

"No luck!" I announced sadly.

"Have you tried in here?" she indicated the flume.

"What's the use? There's nothing in there and besides, you've been banging your heels against it for half an hour. Probably scared every fish in the county."

"I bet I get one, smarty-pants, and without moving from here, too!"

So she did, and so she caught a three-pound brown trout that I'd undoubtedly scared in there with my splashing around out in the main stream—undoubtedly. There was so little water and so little space in that flume that we couldn't use a net. I had to reach in and grab him by the lip to get him out.

That wasn't a patch on what happened next day, though. We were up near Big Indian on a brook that

(Continued on page 12)

Virginia Deer Antlers Grow Big

By GEORGE B. JOHNSON*

THE THIRD edition of *Records of North American Big Game* came off the press last January and bears out abundantly the fact, well known by a few of us, that the deer of Virginia grow wonderful antlers, which compare favorably with the finest antlers worn by the bigger northern whitetails. A 200-pound deer in Virginia is most unusual, whereas in Maine, Wisconsin, or New Brunswick the 200-pound buck is common and the big lads go up to 350.

Antler growth is not directly proportional to size, but it does have some type of close relationship with the amount of limestone in the soil. For reasons not entirely clear, the deer of Surry County and in the portions of Virginia straight west of Surry have been famous since Colonial times for large antlers. It is as though a limestone ridge ran across the state, continuing on west through the bluegrass region of Kentucky.

The explanation is obscure, but the facts speak for themselves. Exactly 100 outstanding specimens of whitetail deer antlers are registered in the record book, and 17 of them are from Virginia. The states of Michigan and Wisconsin grow the largest bodied whitetails on the continent, and they are represented by 11 and 5 heads, respectively.

New York and Maine have been noted for centuries as great deer states. But New York has only 8 and Maine only 3 of the 100 outstanding heads recorded. The fine state of Pennsylvania, held up to us lowly Virginians as representing all that is good in wildlife management, has been able to sire only three record deer.

The world record whitetail buck is from New Brunswick, and I know from many trips there that the whitetails are big. But only eight New Brunswick deer are in the record book.

There was a fine scholarly article in *"Field and Stream"* some years ago dealing with the places where it might be possible to bag a whitetail deer with a big set of antlers. Virginia was not mentioned. New Brunswick, New York, Maine, Wisconsin, and Michigan were listed as hot spots, and the record book bears out the fact that they have produced some wonderful heads.

However, this article singled out the Whiteshell area of southern Manitoba, just east of Winnipeg, as the spot on the continent where the most big-antlered whitetails are concentrated. The record book bears out this prediction, for there are 16 Manitoba deer heads listed in the records. I believe every reader will forgive me if I again

mention that 17 Virginia heads are listed.

In our Virginia championships we do not differentiate between the regular symmetrical sets of antlers and the rugged unsymmetrical sets. The listings in the record book separate the antlers into two classes. Our highest ranking Virginia head in the typical symmetrical group was bagged in Southampton County and ranked 16th worldwide; the next best is from Augusta County and ranks 23rd. The highest ranking Virginia head among the unsymmetrical antlers is from Augusta County and ranks 8th worldwide; the next best is from Shenandoah and ranks 10th.

Our Virginia deer scoring system was adopted first for the 1945 contest. The Boone and Crockett Club of New York, which finances the publication of the Record Book, developed a scoring system for all types of big game in 1950, but their system for deer automatically ruled out all big, rugged, unsymmetrical heads, which are often the most handsome. We rubbed this fact in pretty hard to them, and last year they changed their scoring system, by setting up a special class for the rugged heads, calling them non-typical heads. To use their system in our state contests would result in two state champions, a symmetrical and an unsymmetrical champion. Our Virginia scoring system takes care of all of this and arrives at the best head, symmetrical or not.

When you realize that the record book includes the

(Continued on page 12)



A small portion of the prize trophies owned by the author and displayed in his home in Newport News

*George Brooks Johnson is outdoor writer for the *Newport News Daily Press*.



Number 37, 12 points,
typical, killed in Isle of
Wight County in 1945,
by Eugene Jones



Number 15, 17 points,
non-typical, killed in High-
land County in 1950, by
C. S. McCormick



Number 8, 21 points, non-
typical, killed in Augusta
County in 1948, by Melvin
A. Wheeler



Number 41, 15 points,
typical, killed in Prince
George County in 1947,
by A. E. Wheeler



Number 10, 22 points,
non-typical, killed in Shen-
andoah County in 1949,
by Bruce Orndorff

VIRGINIA DEER ANTLERS GROW BIG

(Continued from page 10)

best heads from all the museums in the world; that it includes sets of antlers bagged so long ago that even the records are lost; when you look at the pictures of the antlers which we must buck up against in competition; it makes me feel very proud of the work we have done in the past 10 years in assembling our records of the best deer antlers bagged annually in Virginia.

There are four species of deer on the continent, each

It made me feel good to find that 11 of my own deer heads are listed in the total of 189. No other individual has half as many, and the greatest number owned by any museum is 10, owned by the National Collection of Heads and Horns in New York City, backed by all the power of the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Zoological Society.

This does not mean that I have the finest collection of

VIRGINIA'S "TYPICAL" SYMMETRICAL HEADS LISTED IN RECORDS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME

Rank	County	Year Killed	Owner	Address
16	Southampton	1946	Wade Styles	Elizabeth City, N. C.
23	Augusta	1946	Carl A. Van Lear	Staunton
37	Isle of Wight	1945	J. Eugene Jones	Smithfield
41	Prince George	1947	A. E. Wheeler	Richmond
46	Rockingham	1949	Ben H. May	Hinton
48	Bath	1946	G. R. Cline	Covington
54	Augusta	1947	Hiram C. Arey	Harrisonburg
56	Bath	1946	Frazier F. Surber	Iron Gate
69	Sussex	1950	Marvin L. Stieh	Wakefield
73	Prince George	1950	Donald A. Sowers	Hopewell
78	Rockingham	1946	H. L. Boney	Vienna
80	Rockingham	1945	E. S. Phillips	Harrisonburg
82	Highland	1949	H. M. Carpenter	Bolar

VIRGINIA'S "NON-TYPICAL" UNSYMMETRICAL HEADS LISTED IN RECORDS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME

Rank	County	Year Killed	Owner	Address
8	Augusta	1948	M. A. Wheeler	Deerfield
10	Shenandoah	1949	Bruce C. Orndorff	Winchester
12	Southampton	1950	Willie Ketchen	Zuni
15	Highland	1950	C. S. McCormick	Staunton

listed separately in the record book. The whitetail deer is the deer of the eastern woodlands, the mule deer inhabits the Rockies, the blacktail deer is found only in the Pacific Northwest, while the Coues deer (often called the Arizona whitetail) lives in our southwestern states and in Mexico. A total of 189 deer of these various species are listed in the book as of world record caliber.

deer antlers in the world: the National Collection owns the finest collection in the world, for it has two world records and two second places. But I have the second place and the sixth place Coues deer and the third and fourth place blacktail deer and a good many other mighty big heads. I was proud of my collection before the record book came out, and I am prouder of it now.

FISH ARE WHERE YOU FIND THEM

(Continued from page 9)

was largely posted by a big city fishing club. An old couple living on the brook had refused to sell their portion of the water, and had left it open to the public. As usual, I was wading the main stream and had landed a fair number of eight and ten inchers—mostly rainbows. Glen was wandering around up in the pasture playing with the pet goat that supplied the old folks with milk. On one side of the pasture was an old mudhole probably left by a spring freshet. I glanced up once or twice to see what she was doing, and watched her casting into the mudhole. "What these girls will do," I thought. Suddenly came a terrific blast of bleats from the goat, squealings and hollerings from Glen. "Oh! oh! She's

fallen in!" I said, and splashed awkwardly across the stream and up the little rise. I got there just in time to see her beach another trout just as big as the one she caught the day before!

"Oooooo, this is FUN! Maybe if you'd fish in the right places you'd catch a big one, too!"

I ask you, what's the answer to that?

I'll skip over a couple of other incidents. Things like the ouananiche that hit a floating wet fly ten feet from shore between two beached canoes in water all churned up by ourselves and the guides unloading for lunch in Maine. I was changing reels and there must have been

(Continued on page 26)

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

1952-53 HUNTING FATALITIES DROP 77% BELOW 1951-52 SEASON'S: Virginia's three hunting fatalities reported for the 1952-53 season, ending January 20, were a 77% drop below the 13 reported during the 1951-52 season, I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, discloses.

The three fatalities reported to the Virginia Commission are the least number on record for Virginia.

In addition, the 12 non-fatal accidents reported this season represent a drop of 25% below last year's 16.

The total of 15 hunting casualties, both fatal and non-fatal, for the 1952-53 season is the lowest since 1947 when there was also a total of 15. Two of this season's deaths were caused by 22-caliber rifles and one by a shotgun.

The discouraging part of these accidents, said Quinn, is that "two of the three fatalities this year were children under 17 years of age, as were five of the non-fatal accidents."

The Commission is greatly encouraged, said Quinn, by this low-record season. The over-all effect of the Commission-sponsored annual hunting safety campaign is finally becoming apparent.

FISHING LICENSE-COST LOW IN VIRGINIA: During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952, Virginia ranked 21st among the 48 states in the number of fishing licenses issued and 26th in the amount of revenue derived from the sale of such licenses. This means that the average cost of a fishing license in Virginia is considerably below the average of the 48 states.

COMMISSION HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 20: The annual meeting of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries was held March 20 at Commission headquarters, 7 North Second Street, Richmond, Miss Evelyn M. Paris, assistant executive director and Commission secretary, discloses. At this meeting, the Commissioners heard recommendations for new regulations or proposed changes in the present hunting regulations. There were not many changes made in the regulations, said Miss Paris, although it was necessary to revise the regulations somewhat.

LARGE DUCK-GEESE CARRY-OVER ON ATLANTIC FLYWAY: According to Ernest R. Atkinson, federal game management agent, with headquarters at Tappahannock, Va., there was a larger carry-over of ducks and geese on the Atlantic Flyway this year than has been experienced for some time. This means, said Atkinson, that there should be more birds on the breeding grounds this spring and early summer than in many previous years. If there is sufficient rainfall and weather conditions are normal, he said, we should expect an even heavier duck and geese migration in the early fall and winter of 1953. The Atlantic Flyway had the lightest duck kill in proportion to the population during the season ending January 10 than in several years. Atkinson attributed this light kill to the "blue bird weather conditions." "There were only about half a dozen good duck days during the entire season," declared Atkinson.

2,000 WILDLIFERS AND SPORTSMEN IN ATTENDANCE AT NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE CONFERENCE: The 18th Annual North American Wildlife Conference, held last March 9, 10, 11 in the Nation's Capital, at the Hotel Statler, drew some 2,000 wildlife biologists and sportsmen from every state in the United States and from practically every North American province and country.

Governor Douglas McKay of Oregon, new Secretary of the Interior under President Eisenhower, served as a feature speaker on the program of the opening general session.

The North American Wildlife Conference is the largest and most important annual international conservation meeting in North America. The first was called by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936. Preceding meetings known as the American Game Conference dated back to 1915, however. At the nine general and technical sessions scheduled all phases of renewable natural resource management and administration were discussed by the foremost authorities in their fields.

Do you want to do
something for wildlife?
Here is one answer

AN IDEAL SPRING

In keeping with the Game Com-
to do something constructive
pictures on wood duck nesting
dividends in more ways than
Why not give this beautiful



A. Empty nail kegs make handy nest houses. Begin by drilling several drainage holes in battam



B. Saw out 4-inch hale near top and fit side with nail baard



C. Fill battam af keg with 4 inches of sawdust, straw ar ather saft material



D. Fit top with caver; this one is galvanized tin and wired dawn



E. Attach ta tree 6 ar mare feet high and nea water. Nate tin tree guard to ward of predatars

ING PROJECT FOR SPORTSMEN

Commission's policy of encouraging individuals and game clubs to wildlife, we present these two series of "how to do it" boxes. It is a simple, inexpensive and rewarding project with one. Wood ducks nest in April, hatch their young in May. "Summer duck" a helping hand?

Commission photos by Kesteloo



1. Soft lumber is fine for the constructed box. Use compass to outline hole



2. Minimum inside should be 10 x 10 inches. Note 4-inch entrance hole



3. Back board and hinged cover facilitate erection and clean out



4. Best places to put wood duck boxes are ponds, morshes, creeks. This site is ideal as it is completely surrounded by water. A boat eases the transport problem. Why not take a bootload of boxes and put them out on your next fishing trip?



REMEMBER “52”!

By E. E. RODGER
Virginia Forest Service

A gray smoldering road of devastation--30 feet wide and reaching from Norfolk, Va., to Los Angeles 10 times was the price of our forest fire damage in Virginia last year

Photos courtesy Virginia Forest Service

REMEMBER 1952! This phrase will ring in the ears of “woods-lovers” for many years to come. It was during the year 1952 that Virginia lost so many acres to that Red Menace—Fire.

What started those fires that burned enough forest land in this Commonwealth to make a road of burned snags 30 feet wide to reach from Norfolk, Va., to Los Angeles, Calif. 10 times, or a distance of over 31,000 miles? More than 33 percent of the 2,494 fires were caused by careless smokers, 25 percent by careless brush

and trash burners and 16 percent were of incendiary origin. The remaining 26 percent were caused by children playing with matches, lightning, railroads, campfires, lumbering, and various other miscellaneous causes.

Were any of us, who subscribe to VIRGINIA WILDLIFE, guilty of starting any of 1952's fires? If our answer is an emphatic NO—how can we be so certain? Perhaps in an unguarded moment we flipped a cigarette from our vehicle, or lit our pipe and tossed the match, unextinguished, into the leaves. We are all creatures of

habit and quite often these habits are bad. To get our minds dwelling on the fire problem, answer the few questions listed below:

1. Did I ever set fire to a wastebasket?
2. Did I ever set my ashtray on fire?
3. Did I ever burn a hole in the living room rug, or burn a hole in my suit?
4. Have I ever burned leaves or trash and had to frantically dash for the garden hose or water bucket because the wrong things caught fire?
5. Have I ever had to call the fire department because the fire on the vacant lot I was burning off got out of control?
6. Have I ever thoughtlessly tossed a burning match, cigarette, cigar or pipe heel onto dry leaves or grass?
7. Have I ever carelessly left a camp or warming fire unextinguished?

Let's face it folks, all of us have at one time or another played with fire and gotten burned! This isn't to be taken too lightly and passed off as just another human failing.

We can, if we try, break habits and the habit of being careless with fire must be broken if we expect the forests of Virginia to keep producing a timber crop to keep the wheels of industry rolling. The unburned forests also are necessary for good hunting and fishing.

The sportsmen did an excellent job this past year in co-operating with the timberland owners. More than 300 thousand pine seed envelopes were distributed to hunters and fishermen and each packet contained at least 20 seed. Granted that every one of the six million seed distributed will not grow into a forest tree. Some of the seed will be eaten by birds and rodents and some were not properly planted, but if half of the six million seed produce trees the sportsmen can feel proud of their accomplishment. Projects such as this tend to establish a good relationship between hunter and landowner.

Another good project for the sportsmen to work on is to educate the other fellows, who buy licenses but do not buy sportsmanship, in good woods manners. These are the men who go night hunting and leave their warming fire unextinguished. The men who smoke game out of hollow trees—many a raging forest fire was started this way—are in need of a lesson on sportsmanship. The fishermen who will "hit" the streams this spring should be on the alert for telltale smoke and immediately investigate it. A campfire unattended should be drowned—dead out. A wildfire should be fought and if too large to handle, take time out from fishing to report it to a forest warden.

By being a good sportsman and living by the "code of the woods" the final summary of the 1953 forest fire record should show a tremendous decrease, especially in the number of fires caused by careless smokers and unextinguished warming fires. Good sportsmen practice fire prevention and hunter-landowner co-operation the year around. Perhaps your club or group of hunting and fishing companions will organize into a fire-fighting team to keep your hunting areas green.

Three tools used in fire prevention: the lookout tower for spotting fires, the roadside signs for cautioning and reminding the public to be careful with fire, and a good habit to get into—breaking your match before discarding it. Yet, fires continue to burn our forests, such as the Dismal Swamp fire shown below and more game habitat is destroyed



IT ONLY takes two quail hunters, swapping experiences of previous seasons, to bring the discussion, sooner or later, around to the "Mexican Quail." Alleged habits of this bird are many. It flushes wild, runs on the ground, makes exceptionally long flights, lights in trees, seeks cover under honeysuckle and brush, and makes few and poor covey shots with no single's shooting in between. To the quail hunter of today, the days of the "good old Virginia Bobwhite" are soon to become a thing of the past.

This complaint is so often voiced that a look at the facts and figures of Mexican quail stocking should be interesting. The figures are somewhat surprising, but they represent all available records.

During the period from 1928 through 1930, 25,080 Mexican quail (*Colinus virginianus texanus*) were liberated in Virginia by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries; 5,040 were released in March 1928, 10,000 in the spring of 1929, and 10,040 in the spring of 1930. Since that time, no other liberations of birds from Mexico or Texas have been made by the Commission.

Since this all happened before many of us took our hunting too seriously, it is difficult to locate a keen and experienced observer who had had the opportunity to make an on-the-spot appraisal.

Such a person, however, is Willie Craig, a well-known retired dog trainer of Louisa County, who probably has had as much field experience with quail as anyone in Virginia.

Mr. Craig recalled the year 1927, when he ordered a number of Mexican quail to be delivered at two-week intervals during late February and March. When his first shipment of birds arrived, they were released exactly according to instructions, in a good thicket, with an abundance of scratch grain scattered in the vicinity. This liberation was made about three o'clock in the afternoon. In spite of every possible precaution, two birds flushed from the box as the door was raised. The location where these birds lit was carefully marked.

After three days, Mr. Craig was working his dogs in the same area and began to circle the release site with high hopes of finding the birds. Wide circles produced nothing, so he began to close in, a little at a time, until he got into the area where he had marked down the two birds that had flushed from the box. At this point, he was working his dogs very close and did find the birds. Both of them were stone dead right where he had marked them down. He went at once to the place where the remainder had been liberated, and there in a radius of a few feet he found every one just as dead as the first two. The temperature on the night of the liberation was about 30 degrees.

His second shipment of birds met with a similar fate. The third and last shipment was kept in captivity until April 15, when the weather was warm and food was plentiful. To his knowledge, these birds were released without loss. From this release of approximately 30 birds, however, only one covey of pure Mexican birds and one covey of crossed Mexican and native birds were

What About Those

produced that fall. Mr. Craig states that the pure Mexican birds were easy to distinguish in the field, because of their much paler color. The first generation cross produced a bird larger than our native with color half-way between the two species. These two coveys were followed for several months before they disappeared, never to be found again.

These first-hand experiences are cited to point out the low survival of these Mexican quail in Virginia.

The ideas that hunters have about the physical characteristics of the "Mexican" quail differ considerably. Some remark that these birds have a topknot consisting of several feathers sticking up on their heads, forming a hood or eyeshade. This description sounds much like the California Valley Quail, but nothing like the Mexican. Others say that they are smaller and darker than our natives. The truth is that they are only about an ounce lighter than the natives, and grey on their backs, where our birds are reddish brown, this giving them a much paler look. The bars on the breast feathers may be a bit darker than our natives.

Most hunters, however, decide that birds are "Mexi-



Mexican Quail?

By WILLIAM P. BLACKWELL, *Game Technician*

cans" more by size and behavior than by color. If size is to be a criterion, then there are several things that should be considered. The factors of greatest importance in determining size are age and food conditions on the range where the bird develops. As is generally known, quail begin to bring off broods early in June, if their first nesting attempt is not broken up. If, on the other hand, this first nest is broken up, the birds will renest and start over again. This renesting will continue until the parent birds are successful in hatching all or part of a brood, even if they are still trying to the time the frost comes. The late hatched birds (after September 1) have only a slight chance of survival, because the weather is too cold for them to pull through the first few weeks of life. Therefore, we may find birds of all sizes when we go into the field in November. Quite naturally, there is a marked difference in the size of birds hatched in June or July and those hatched after August 15.

This brings us up to the point of behavior or sporting characteristics. We might start with a quotation from Herbert L. Stoddard's famous book "The Bobwhite

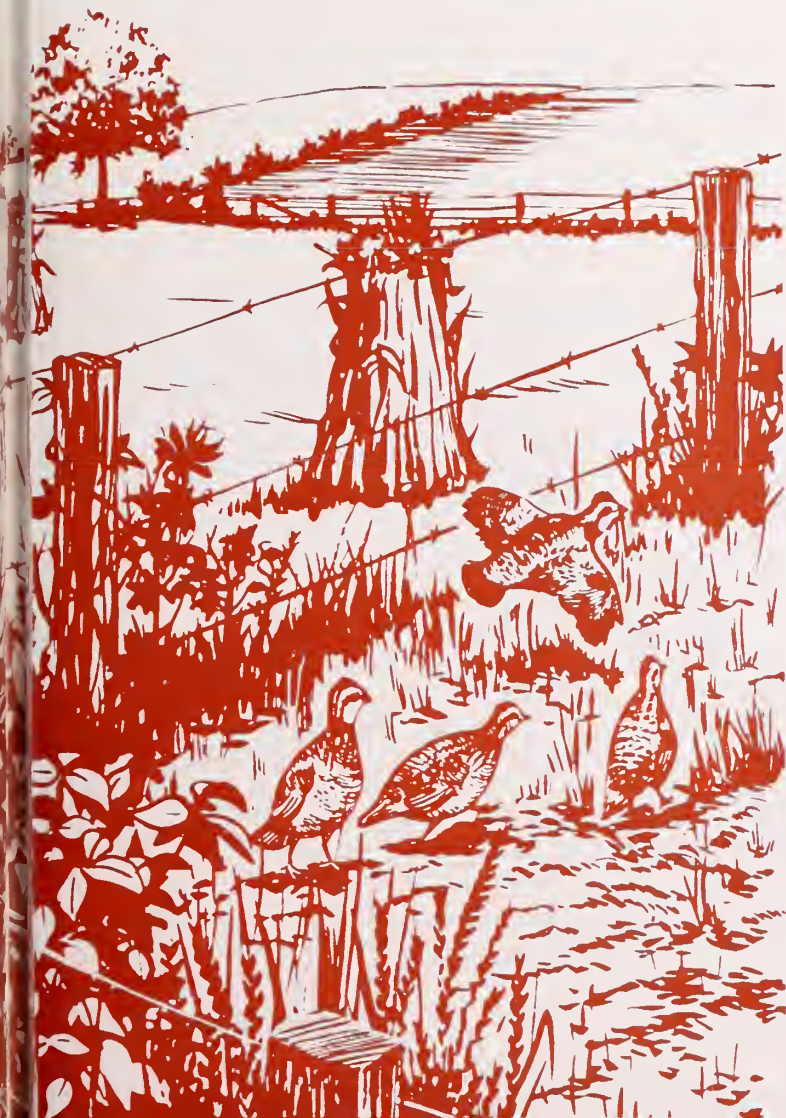
Quail" which was written in the early 'thirties, when the Mexican quail situation first came under study. He states:

"Great difference of opinion prevails among sportsmen and dog handlers as to the sporting qualities of the quail imported from Mexico, some claiming that they run so badly that good dog work is difficult and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, many like them because they are not so well 'educated' as the native stock, and are more apt to make short first flights and give good single-bird shooting.

"While experienced sportsmen are in the best position to judge of this, it must be admitted that we have not been able to notice any consistent difference in sporting qualities. Frequently, the native birds run badly, especially when cover is scant, or the vegetation wet, and the Mexican birds do the same. The difference in flight seems to be largely a matter of 'education.' As the Mexican birds come from a country where they are seldom hunted for sport they do not at first make long flights to heavy cover. The same is true of pure native stock on ground where they have been protected for a period of years. Where persistently hunted either stock soon learns to spend the hunting season on the border of dense thicket cover and take refuge in it at the first disturbance." To have been written over 20 years ago, the above quotation sounds a lot like the case we have today.

Frequently, birds are assumed to be running on the ground, when actually it is a case of the hunter not knowing his dog. A young dog, particularly, will realize that he is in the vicinity of birds and freeze into a staunch point. After several seconds, he will move on and freeze again. This may happen several times before he has the birds located to his satisfaction and remain steady. Almost without fail, a person will say that the birds are running on him, but this is not the case. The dog is just not sure of himself. This is not denying that birds do not run ahead of a dog, for they often do. But in many cases, poor dog work provides the grounds for speculating that birds are running. Dogs may also establish a staunch point on quail, but when the hunter walks in to flush, the birds are way off to one side or perhaps 20 yards in front of the dog. The mood of the hunter frequently governs his remarks on this situation. If the birds are in front and he gets a shot, he will praise the dog for having a "choke bore nose," and standing them at long range, but if the birds are too far out of position and he doesn't get a shot, he often blames them for running away after his dog pointed! In many cases the fault lies with the dog and not with the birds. The dog pointed but

(Continued on page 26)



THE \$4000 DEER

By HARRY KING
Conservation Officer



Photo by James O. Campbell

A beautiful sight, but a tempting target to the unorthodox hunter who hunts from an automobile along the road

NO DOUBT, the four game law violators whom I refer to in this story felt, just as all violators feel, that they wouldn't be caught. Of course they were, and the price they paid for their law breaking came high.

Many law violators are not caught, at least not at first. But it would seem that the law breaker has one characteristic failing: he becomes complacent after the first or second *successful* violation, and with this complacency he goes on to more and bigger crimes. But the "day of reckoning" comes to every law offender. Sometimes apprehension takes a long time, sometimes a man is caught in his first offense.

It is unimportant whether the men involved in this incident were first offenders. The point is this: Payment for crime comes high sometimes, even for the game thief. So high, in fact, that the chance seems hardly worthwhile.

Violations do go on. In this case, it cost the violators \$1,000, to say nothing of public embarrassment—and all for one illegally killed deer! It is hoped these men have learned their lesson and that other would-be game-law violators, hearing of this case, will be deterred from further game thievery.

The story begins back in January, 1951. Sheriff Basil R. Belscher called me at my home in Disputanta at eight in the morning on January 28. A deer was shot and killed during the night—a Sunday at that—and the sheriff requested that I come to his office in Prince George Court House.

Arriving at the sheriff's office, I was informed by the sheriff's brother, Herbert Belscher, that he had seen a flash of light, heard three shots, and a deer bleat about nine Sunday night. The noise and light seemed to be about a-quarter-of-a-mile from his old home place in Prince George County.

Belscher drove at high speed for three miles down an old country road, finally coming upon a car parked at the side. He took the license number and headed for the spot where he had heard the shooting. Searching the area, he found some expended 30- and 35-caliber cartridges and spots of blood in the road. In minutes he telephoned the Petersburg Police and got a check on the car owner from the license number.

He told us that evidence showed that the car belonged to Nick Walsuk, of Yale, Virginia, a man on whom I had had a number of complaints. The sheriff and I disposed of some cases as quickly as possible and started for Yale, some 40 miles away, prone on an investigation.

After traveling 10 miles we recognized a passing car and thought it was Nick Walsuk. Turning around, we made a chase and forced him to stop. There were three men in the Walsuk car—Nick, Alex Walsuk, a brother, and Joe Joyner.

We inspected their car and found a 30-30 Marlin rifle and some 30- and 35-caliber ammunition. The trunk was bloody and deer hair covered the inside.

We questioned the men but they gave us no usable information, so we took them to the sheriff's office where

questioning continued. All three denied a part in the deer killing. Joyner was questioned about the blood on his clothes and admitted that he had been rabbit hunting the day before, on Sunday. (This is illegal as all hunting on Sunday is prohibited).

The Walsuk brothers only admitted that the night before they were at Joyner's house at a surprise party.

The three men were charged with hunting deer at night and placed in the Petersburg jail.

The sheriff and I went to the Joyner home and informed the father that we believed he knew about the deer that was killed. He admitted knowing of it, but stated that his son had had nothing to do with the killing. He said that the two Walsuk brothers, Earl Moehring, and Andrew Mitrison had brought the deer to his house and skinned it out in his woodshed.

Mr. Joyner was asked where the deer was killed and pointed in the direction from which Belscher had heard the shots. On searching we found a tail, foot, and intestines in the woodshed. I went to the Justice of the Peace and obtained a warrant for Earl Moehring, a bakery operator in Alexandria, and Andrew Mitrison, who was purported to live in Alexandria. The warrant charged them with hunting deer at night.

Mr. Joyner informed us further that Moehring had taken the whole deer to Alexandria without sharing it with his accomplices.

A teletype was dispatched to the State Police near Alexandria, asking them to pick up Moehring and hold him until we arrived. I told them we wanted the man's rifle and, by all means, the deer. The warrant was placed on file in Prince George County.

C. P. Montgomery, conservation officer from Powhatan, joined me in Richmond and we rushed to Alexandria. There we learned that the State Police had picked up Moehring. The police had walked in on him at his bakery as he was cleaning his rifle. When questioned, Moehring readily admitted his part in the deer

killing. He told us that he and Mitrison went to Sussex County the preceding Saturday night to paint a house. When they left Sunday evening, they were stopped at the Nottoway River Bridge by the Walsuk brothers who wanted to kill a deer. They joined them.

Deer were seen all the way over into Prince George County, and they finally killed one about three miles from Joyner's house. The carcass was put into Nick's car and taken to Joyner's house where it was skinned. It was then wrapped in a sheet and taken to Alexandria. Moehring said he still had it in his freezer.

After confessing, Moehring was placed under \$500 bond to appear before Trial Justice Binford in the Prince George Court House on January 31. Mitrison was also picked up and placed under a similar bond. Moehring's car, located in Fairfax County, was impounded pending the outcome of the trial.

After 16 hours on the case, Montgomery and I got our first meal and returned to our homes.

At the trial in Prince George County on January 31, both parties were represented by counsel. After lengthy testimony on both sides, Trial Justice Binford found the defendants guilty as charged.

Punishment in the case was severe. In addition to the fines, all vehicles used in the illegal deer killing were confiscated. Fines and costs for the four men were heavy, plus the loss of their cars and rifles. Young Joyner was fined for hunting rabbits on Sunday, out of season. The breakdown for the fines for killing the deer was as follows: Four were fined \$100 plus \$27 costs each for hunting out of season; four were fined \$100 plus \$27 costs for hunting on Sunday; four were fined \$100 plus \$27 costs for hunting deer at night from an automobile; two were fined \$50 plus \$13.50 costs for hunting deer with rifles; and two were fined \$100 plus \$13.50 costs each for transporting deer in an automobile. They were charged \$50 for the replacement value of the deer.

Confiscated were a 1951 model car belonging to Nick Walsuk, and a 1950 model car belonging to Earl Moehring. In addition to the automobiles, a 30-30 caliber rifle belonging to Nick Walsuk, and a 35-caliber rifle belonging to Earl Moehring were also confiscated.

The rifles were sold for \$25 apiece at the sheriff's auction. The cars brought \$550 and \$1350, respectively.

The Walsuk brothers staunchly refused, before and during the trial, to admit any part in the crime. But after the trial justice returned a verdict of guilty, they finally admitted to Sheriff Belscher and me that they had done wrong. Their trial, they said, was fair.

In relating the events leading to the arrest and conviction of these violators, I have dealt only briefly with some important details. In particular the part played by Trial Justice W. Francis Binford, Commonwealth Attorney Frank L. Wyche, Sheriff Belscher, Herbert, his brother, and the Alexandria detachment of the Virginia State Police. Without the willing co-operation of these people, the case of the \$4,000 deer would have remained unsolved and a group of law-breaking deer slayers would have made a mockery of the game laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Commission Staff Photo

Violations do go on, but when it is considered that it cost four violators more than \$4,000 for one deer, illegally killed, it is hardly worth the chance



A REPORT:

The 1952-53 Deer, Bear and Turkey Kill

By CHESTER F. PHELPS

Chief, Game Division

DURING the past hunting season two records of long standing were shattered by the rifle and shotgun of the Virginia deer hunter. For the first time in the recorded history of the Virginia Game Commission, the total state deer harvest surmounted 10,000 and for the first time the deer kill west of the Blue Ridge topped that of the counties in the east.

While skill and marksmanship of the hunters were decisive, neither record would have been possible without the active support, interest and co-operation of many Virginia clubs and private citizens. Organized and individual sportsmen and conservationists, together with the work of professional and lay game managers have been aiding and protecting our deer populations over a period of more than 20 years. For, as has been predicted for a decade, the stocking of deer, through the efforts of these persons, from the late 1920's to the early 1940's in western counties is fast making west of the Blue Ridge our most important big game area. This achievement of game management is the more remarkable when one remembers that as recently as 1927 there were virtually no deer in any county west of the Blue Ridge, except a small remnant in Bath.

Now the pendulum has swung the other way. Now the Commission is keeping a watchful eye on areas where too many deer are causing losses to field and orchard crops. We do not want to repeat the mistakes of other states that had too many deer too long. In order that this would not happen, the Commission permitted the taking of does the last day of the season in six of the western counties.

It was necessary to apply control at once, wherever necessary, if we were to perpetuate deer hunting in the west. It is a grim fact that the best way to exterminate a deer herd is to stop harvesting the annual increment. It is only a matter of time until there are more deer than there is browse to feed them, and when killing stops, they succumb to starvation and associated complications, such as disease, parasites, and predators.

In keeping with the growing importance of Virginia's deer, Commission game technicians started a study of

populations and herd conditions. The information secured by examination and measurement of many deer should help solve management problems and doubtless will become increasingly important.

As will be noted from the tabulation, the kill of bear during the 1952-53 season was more than double that of the preceding year. Unfortunately, so little is known of the black bear that this sudden increase can be viewed with as much alarm as satisfaction. The bear is apparently semi-migratory and undoubtedly many of those found in western Virginia are casual visitors from adjoining mountainous states. From all available information, however, it does appear that the kill of the past season cannot be sustained for many years without concern for the future of this game animal.

Perhaps the darkest spot in the statewide game picture is reflected by the decreased take of wild turkey. Last year (the season 1951-52) concern was expressed in many quarters on the apparent decrease in the number of our largest game bird. This year extremely small turkey broods were reported in many sections and the decreased kill supports this earlier observation.

It is true, at least in Piedmont and Tidewater Virginia, that the wild turkey has been fighting a losing battle for many years against the inroads of civilization. The wild turkey requires, for successful survival, particularly against increased hunting pressure, large areas of forest containing many mature, seed-producing trees. The current construction boom, expanding cities and towns, intensified farming and other modern demands on forests and lands have taken their toll of the traditional wild turkey range. This, together with other factors, some known and some unknown, may be responsible for decreased numbers and consequently a lowered kill.

Special studies of the wild turkey are being made in several sections of the state in an effort to determine what might be done to check the present alarming trend.

(See tabulation of kills by counties on page 26.)



TROUT SEASON OPENS MAY 1

The Virginia trout season opens at 12:00 noon, May 1. Fishermen, heading into the rugged western mountains for their favorite sport, should find more and better trout in the fast water this year than in any previous season in the history of trout fishing in Virginia.

Although there will be more trout placed in the streams this year than in any previous year, planting will be completed approximately two weeks prior to the opening day.

All trout will be stocked in the public fishing waters of the state on or before April 15, depending upon weather conditions. This should give planted trout time enough to accustom themselves to their new environment and assume the characteristics of the native wild trout before May 1.

GAME WARDENS, TECHNICIANS, PLANNING BETTER FARM GAME HABITAT PROGRAM

State game wardens and game technicians held a series of meetings during February and early March to plan a better co-ordinated program for the farm game habitat improvement work of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

At a meeting held at the Orange County Courthouse February 12, the correlated programs of game wardens and game technicians were discussed and future co-operative efforts between the two groups were planned.

The Commission believes that with a closer co-ordination of programs between the game wardens and the game technicians, a more effective farm game habitat improvement program can be built throughout the state.

HOG ISLAND MUSKRAT HARVEST

William R. Berryman, who was engaged by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries to harvest the muskrats from the Commission's 2,100-acre Hog Island Waterfowl Refuge, reported that he expected a total catch of 2,000 rats during the season beginning January 1 and ending March 15, 1953.



William Berryman is shown lifting a muskrat from the trap in the Hog Island Marshes

At last report, Berryman was taking rats at the rate of 30 to 40 a day, and was looking forward to topping his goal of 2,000. The trapper has some 1,400 acres of muskrat marsh in which to trap, leaving about 700 acres of dry land which the muskrat does not inhabit.

1952-53 WILD TURKEY KILL DROPS 26% BELOW 1951-52 SEASON

The 1,600 turkeys reported killed in Virginia for the season just closed is a 26% drop below the 2,148 reported during the 1951-52 season. I. T. Quinn, executive director of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, discloses.

With reports in from practically

all Virginia counties, it is evident, said Quinn, that the total turkey kill for the 1952-53 season was considerably below last year's record kill.

The Commission is greatly concerned about the wild turkey population in the state. Despite the success which the Commission has been having in the production of wild turkeys at its 17,000-acre game farm in the state forest in Cumberland County, said Quinn, there were apparently fewer of these game birds in Virginia during the past season than in previous years.

In an effort to combat this decrease in the wild turkey population, state forest officials and Game Commission representatives met February 10 to discuss the situation. Game biologists, headed by C. F. Phelps, chief, game division; C. H. (Kit) Shaffer, game biologist with headquarters in Lynchburg, both representing the Commission; and S. G. Hobart, representing the State Forest Service, made plans to use the state forest in Cumberland County as a home-base laboratory for studying the turkey management program of the Commission.

With this area in Cumberland as a base, Robert McDowell, a specialist in wild turkey management, will conduct studies throughout the state.

It is hoped, said Quinn, that through these studies, facts may be developed which will help the Commission in the future management of the wild turkey in Virginia.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE, SOUTH CAROLINA DOOR PRIZE

Commission personnel are flattered to learn that the Spartanburg County Wildlife Conservation Association, Spartanburg, S. C., gives a one-year subscription of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE as a door prize at each of their regular meetings.



GEORGE WASHINGTON NATIONAL FOREST BRIDGES

A. H. Anderson, supervisor of the George Washington National Forest, received bids last January 30 covering proposed improvement of five bridges situated in the North River section of Augusta County. The capacity of the bridges is to be increased from 10 to 15 tons. The present timber bridge decks are to be replaced with concrete, resulting in a permanent structure requiring little or no maintenance. The bridges, important for the protection, administration, and utilization of that part of the national forest, are on Forest Development Roads 95 and 96.

FEDERATION STAMPS

The National Wildlife Federation's issue of wildlife stamps for 1953 includes five fish and 31 other forms of animals and plants. The paintings are by three noted nature artists.

More than 400 species of American wildlife have been portrayed by leading artists on the National Wildlife Federation stamps since the series was started in 1938. The stamps are the means by which the non-profit Federation not only finances its own activities, but lends financial aid for conservation projects sponsored by affiliated state organizations. Wildlife stamp receipts are being used also to support college fellowships and to supply conservation teaching aids to schools.

1953-54 DUCK STAMP WILL FEATURE BLUE-WINGED TEAL

A black and white wash drawing featuring five blue-winged teal in flight over bulrush, titled "Early Express" has been chosen as the design for the 1953-54 Migratory

Bird Hunting Stamp.

Clayton B. Seagears, director of Conservation Education, New York Conservation Department, drew the winning design.

A panel of 18 waterfowl experts judged the design best of 92 entries submitted in the competition. The 1953-54 stamp will be the 20th in the federal duck stamp series.

Fifty-three contestants entered this year's competition, with 24 states, Alaska and Canada represented.

Seagears is a native of New York



Early Express Blue winged teal

CLAYTON SEAGARS

State and since boyhood has had a consuming interest in the outdoors. Specializing in zoology and journalism, he gained his undergraduate training at the University of Michigan and remained there in 1924 as assistant in vertebrate zoology and conservation under Alexander G. Ruthven. The following 13 years he spent in newspaper work, primarily handling sports, outdoor columns, and general illustrating. In 1937 he joined the New York State Conservation Department as a game research investigator. Later he was named head of the Division of Conservation Education.

Now sold for \$2.00, the duck stamps provide funds that help finance the federal government's waterfowl refuge program. Eighty-five percent of the money realized from the sale of stamps is used by the Fish and Wildlife Service to supplement

other funds for the purchase and maintenance of waterfowl refuges throughout the country. The remaining 15 percent is used for printing and distribution of the stamps, enforcement of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, and other federal activities for migratory bird conservation. All migratory waterfowl hunters over 16 years of age are required by law to purchase and have a stamp of current issue duly signed when hunting.

NATIONAL FOREST REVENUES SET RECORD

Approximately \$43,726,500 in national forest receipts was deposited in the U. S. Treasury by the Forest Service during the last six months of 1952, the U. S. Department of Agriculture announced today. This represents an increase of \$1,936,354 over funds taken in for the same period a year ago, and establishes a new receipt record.

More than 94 percent of the receipts for the six-month period ending December 31 were collected from the sale of timber. The remaining income was from fees for the grazing of cattle, sheep and horses; rental of lands for summer homes, recreation facilities and mineral rights; and water power rights.

The increased revenue from the national forests means also an increased income for the states in which the forests are located, since 25 percent of national forest receipts are returned to them at the end of the fiscal year.

22 WHOOPING CRANES RETURN TO ARANSAS

Twenty-two whooping cranes returned to their wintering grounds in Texas, the National Audubon Society reports. The present count, which

was determined by an aerial survey conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is one less than last year's total of 23 cranes. Only two young of the year have been identified, though further surveys may reveal that some of the others are young.

All that remains of the original wild population, these stately white birds migrate from their breeding range in the far north to the Aransas Wildlife Refuge on the Texas coast.

At least two cranes fell to guns of law-violating gunners, as they made their annual flight toward Texas this fall, co-operating conservation agencies reported.

John H. Baker, president of the National Audubon Society, said, "Each year it becomes more apparent that illegal hunting is the major factor in reduction of the numbers of whooping cranes and in increasing the threat of their extinction."

AUDUBON ARM EMBLEM FEATURES EGRET ON BLUE

A flying white egret on a blue background has been adopted as the official arm emblem for members of the National Audubon Society, according to an announcement from the conservation organization's national headquarters in New York City.

The cloth emblem, which is four inches in diameter, will be worn by members on outdoor clothes in order to identify them on field trips and while taking part in various conservation projects sponsored by local branches of the National Audubon Society.

RESOURCE GROUP TO SPONSOR CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS

The Virginia Resource-Use Education Council, meeting at the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory, Gloucester Point, February 10, voted to back a conservation education program in Virginia by sponsoring a series of conservation workshops for in-service teachers throughout the state.

Regarding this sponsorship, the Council requested the Committee on In-Service Workshops to gather information from institutions of

higher learning which plan or are willing to plan to offer a workshop on conservation during the summer of 1953. This information will be used for the purpose of making known to the Council where its aid is needed and desired.

This was the fourth meeting of the Council since its formation a year ago for the purpose of bringing about a better understanding and working relationship among the existing agencies and organizations dealing with natural resources and developing and implementing a broader educational program in these fields.

Those in attendance at the meeting were as follows: E. E. Rodger, Virginia Forest Service; R. S. Bailey, Virginia Fisheries Laboratory; A. P. Bursley, National Park Service; Dr.



Council members take a breath of air after morning meeting at Gloucester Point. (Top) D. S. Wallace, Division of Water Resources, chats with Dr. McHugh, Director of the Fisheries Laboratory, while enjoying a delectable oyster . . . raw

G. B. Zehmer, University of Virginia; Dr. G. W. Jeffers, Longwood State Teachers College; J. H. Gwathmey, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*; A. H. Anderson, U. S. Forest Service; A. L. Wingo, State Board of Education; D. S. Wallace, Division of Water Resources; G. B. P. Mullin, U. S. Forest Service; C. E. Packard, Randolph-Macon College; and J. J. Shomon, R. R. Bowers, and R. E. Merritt, all from the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries.

CROZET SPORTSMEN ORGANIZE CLUB

A newly organized group of hunters and fishermen has been added to the rolls of Virginia sportsmen clubs.

The Crozet Sportsmen Club with 90 members enrolled is in the process of erecting a clubhouse and developing a site for a lake.

Off to a good start, members of this club accounted for 11 bear and 20 deer reported in the recent kill record for the past season.

RICHMOND WALTONIANS LAUNCH VIGOROUS CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Richmond Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, at its regular monthly meeting, February 24 in Richmond, adopted a vigorous program of conservation effort for the forthcoming year.

First on the list of wildlife conservation projects will be the construction and erection of 500 wood duck nesting boxes to be distributed and put up in Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, and New Kent counties.

The chapter agreed to undertake the big project after a talk by J. J. Shomon of the State Game Commission who explained that "Virginia's best-dressed duck—and all-year around resident is in need of artificial nesting boxes—homes that all conservationists can easily prepare from scrap lumber, nail kegs, apple boxes, etc."

Other projects were presented to the club and adopted. Among these were the sponsorship of the Joe Brooks casting demonstration for the Boy Scouts of Richmond, scheduled for the night of March 3, at the Benedictine High School, the sponsorship of an annual fishing contest, the promulgation of an oyster roast, shad bake and a real Brunswick stew campfire.

"This year we are really going to town," said new President Walter Griggs. "We are going to sponsor any number of outdoor projects aimed at youth, we hope to purchase our own property and build our own building, and last, but not least, we are determined to launch a full educational and information program to tell the public just what the Chapter is doing, what the League stands for, and how the general public can help in the conservation of our valuable renewable natural resources."

	Season 1950-51		Season 1951-52			Season 1952-53		
	Deer	Bear	Deer	Bear	Turkey	Deer	Bear	Turkey
Aceomack			8			4		
Albemarle	41		55		50	68		30
Alleghany	64	29	90	12	21	87	16	11
Amelia	67		41		80	56		58
Amherst	5	6	37	6	15	39	10	2
Appomattox	26		37		16	35		33
Augusta	310	66	541	30	77	1131	105	68
Bath	375	25	465	25	81	917	19	48
Bedford		1		2	4		7	3
Bland	15	2	16	5		23	8	
Botetourt	38	38	63	3		74	34	7
Brunswick	10		23		28	18		26
Buehanan		1						
Buckingham	97		163		143	173		102
Campbell	1		3		24			22
Caroline	90		116		87	514		66
Charles City	195		255		12	327		8
Charlotte	17		26		71	17		58
Chesterfield	89		80		65	79		64
Craig	71	1	113	1		112	6	
Culpeper					29	31		18
Cumberland	36		62		43	45		18
Dinwiddie	49		57		66	83		55
Essex	20		40		11	108		7
Fairfax								1
Fauquier					55			27
Fluvanna	14		17		40	16		31
Frederick	146		237		51	432		15
Giles	66		112			147		
Gloucester	16		36			40		
Goochland	19		25		22	14		17
Grayson	81		138			145		
Greensville	34		39		16	44		13
Halifax	279		227		101	201		115
Hanover	35		48		12	55		12
Henrico	6		18		4	9		5
Highland	67	10	107	11	44	119	11	28
Isle of Wight	24		50			60		3
James City	137		195		9	189		6
King George	33		43		10	71		11
King & Queen	42		53		13	169		15
King William	92		97		1	97		5
Lancaster	11		12			19		
Lee	3		9			10		
Loudoun					2			3
Louisa	15		18		50	11		53
Lunenburg	1		6		25			17
Madison							1	
Mathews	23		15			12		
Mecklenburg	16		9		53	15		33
Middlesex	12		21			21		
Nansemond	74	7	85	4	1	118	9	2
Nelson	15	9	21	10	32	19	5	22
New Kent	232		255		1	261		21
Norfolk	279	3	233	7		238	5	
Northumberland	7		17			14		
Nottoway	2		2		19			13
Orange					52	20		34
Page	34	11	65	1	2	64	6	
Pittsylvania			1		10			18
Powhatan	26		34		67	38		51
Prince Edward	12		16		32	13		21
Prince George	113		228		31	544		28
Prince William					46			28
Princess Anne						1		
Rappahannock						1		
Richmond	28		24			40		
Roanoke	6		14			9	1	
Rockbridge	32	42	65	15	29	60	25	12
Rockingham	150	57	198	14	21	256	48	8
Russell						1		
Scott	61		132			100		
Shenandoah	298	2	512		45	1196	1	10
Smyth	156		225	2		235	2	
Southampton	287		322		23	350		18
Spotsylvania	28		50		122	37		71
Stafford					62	28		28
Sturry	120		113		34	208		22
Sussex	603	1	650		52	586		43
Tazewell	33	1	21			30		
Warren	31		73		2	121		1
Warwick	9					15		
Washington	90		72			96		
Westmoreland	16		29			35		
Wise	83		109			101		
Wythe	39	2	48			64	8	
York	62		74		1	97		4
Totals	5,780	314	7,514	148	2,118	10,866	327	1,608

FISH ARE WHERE YOU FIND THEM

(Continued from page 12)

50 yards of line spread around all over the water. That one got away. Then there was the trout in Michigan in a little wet spot that hardly deserved the culvert under the road. Glen, of course, got that one, and he measured 16 inches! And finally there was Accotink Creek in northern Virginia where I live now. I had heard tales of bass in that stream, but when I came to fish it, I had no luck. I was resting on the bank one day when a young fellow came along. It so happened that he was a listener to my weekly program, wherein I dispense sage advice on the manner of taking reluctant fish.

"You know," he remarked, "last week you said that if the regular way of working a streamer doesn't get you any place, try doing it so-and-so. Let's see if it works!"

He cast his streamer—a non-spectacular standard pattern that I'd been using with no results for the preceding two hours. As I said, he cast, and then worked some magic with the fly which he said I'd recommended, and latched on to a 5¼ smallmouth bass.

My reputation as an expert is secure at least with him, and as I remarked, fish are where you find them, but I sure wish I knew what it was that kid did with his streamer!

MEXICAN QUAIL

(Continued from page 19)

had no idea where the birds were, or at least he had them very poorly located.

Similar instances of birds flushing wild can be a misinterpretation of the facts. Last Thanksgiving Day, my pointer was hunting the edge of a lespedeza field when she hit a trail of birds that had fed and left the field toward a honeysuckle thicket. She checked and began to "make game," but instead of throwing her head in the air to catch a body scent she put her nose to the ground and began to work the foot scent. In less time than it takes to tell it, she had worked in too close and flushed the birds. However, being fairly well broken and realizing her mistake, she froze immediately into a point and remained there until we walked to her. My friends thought that the birds had flushed wild.

Birds these days just seem to be getting "onery." They run on the ground, flush wild, fly a mile, light in trees. They even go under brush piles, or in the ground if they can find a hole handy. They do everything to keep us from getting a decent covey shot, and almost eliminate the single bird shooting that used to put most of the birds in the game bag. Perhaps we have brought it all on ourselves, by killing those birds that knew no better than to light in the middle of the field or along a fence row. Many of the birds that lived to breed last spring were those that flew up a tree or went in the ground. With this selective shooting going on for 20 years, and with drastic changes in agriculture, we are now breeding an "educated" bird. But if it were that the bobwhite could not adapt itself to changing conditions, then its very survival would be in danger.

Wildlife Questions and Answers

Ques.: Why does the Game Commission bother to tag fish? How does this help fishermen to catch more fish?

Ans.: The Commission tags fish to obtain information on the number of fish being caught, the size of fish populations, fish movements, and to determine if the fish are making proper growth.

By obtaining this information the Commission fish biologists can determine which management practices would be of most benefit to a particular type of fish in a particular body of water.

Ques.: How many fishing licenses were sold in Virginia during the fiscal year of 1951-52? How many of these were resident and how many non-resident, and what was the total cost of all of them?

Ans.: A total of 336,005 licenses were sold in Virginia during 1951-52 fiscal year, of which 332,971 were resident and 3,034 were non-resident licenses. Anglers paid a total of \$474,888 for these licenses.

Ques.: What accounted for the relatively low kill of ducks in Virginia during the past season, when it seemed that there were more ducks than there have been in several years?

Ans.: A preponderance of "Blue Bird Days" may have been one reason for the low kill. It is true that many ducks were here, but they didn't move around much because of clear weather and when they did they flew high.

Ques.: How many bear were killed during the past hunting season, and which county led in the east and which led in the west?

Ans.: A total of 327 bear were killed in the entire state, with Augusta County far out in front in the west and in the state with 105. Nonsemond County led in the east with 9.

Ques.: What additional stamps or permits are required to fish for particular species of fish in Virginia?

Ans.: A Notional Forest Stamp is required to fish on either of Virginia's two notional forests.

Ques.: Are there any fresh water game fish that can be legally sold in Virginia?

Ans.: No. It is unlawful to sell fresh-water bass, fresh-water trout and any other game fish taken in the fresh waters of the state of Virginia.

Ques.: In what counties of the state is Sunday fishing prohibited?

Ans.: Sunday fishing is prohibited in counties of Alleghany, Both, Blond, Botetourt (except James River and Corvin's Cove), Craig, Giles (except Mountain Lake and New River), Highland, Rockbridge, Surry (except Sunken Meadow Lake in Surry County), and in Silver Lake in Rockingham County.

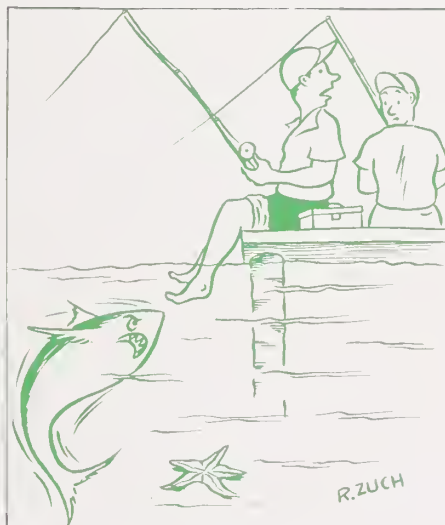
Ques.: What is the location of the Commission's largemouth bass hatchery, and are visitors welcome?

Ans.: The largemouth bass hatchery is located at Stevensville, in King and Queen County. Visitors are always welcome, although it would be a good idea to contact the hatchery manager, Carl Romsey, in advance.

Ques.: Why is Back Bay open to year-round fishing?

Ans.: The waters of Back Bay are freely joined with those of Currituck Sound, located in North Carolina, and the bass migrate freely back and forth from waters in Virginia to waters in North Carolina. North Carolina has no closed season on bass, and it was therefore decided by the Commission that Virginia fishermen were equally entitled to year-round bass fishing in these waters.

Ques.: Why is it almost impossible to keep a shrew alive in captivity? Several that have been live-trapped were put in a pen and they all died from no apparent cause.



"Betcha I get the first bite!"

Ans.: They probably starved to death. The common shrew will starve to death in two or three hours unless it has plenty to eat. It will eat twice its own weight each day. It is odd that they did not eat each other if they were kept in confinement together.

Ques.: Do any of our common game animals eat noxious plants such as poison ivy and poison oak, and if they do are they adversely affected by them, such as the rash that people get from these same plants?

Ans.: Yes, many game and non-game animals eat these noxious plants without apparent ill effects. Poison ivy may be a nuisance to us, but it is popular with wildlife. Poison ivy and poison oak fruits are consumed by many kinds of birds—primarily in winter. In fact, some birds are actually partial to poisonous berries.

Ques.: Is the English sparrow native to the United States or was it imported from England?

Ans.: The English sparrow was first imported into the U. S. in 1850. It was not successful, but another try made in 1852, by Nicholas

Pride, took hold. Other importations were made later. The species is not a true sparrow but a member of the weaver bird group.

Ques.: When were timber wolves exterminated in Virginia?

Ans.: The last Virginia wolf was killed in Towson County in 1910.

Ques.: Is the passenger pigeon the only extinct species of wildlife, or are there others?

Ans.: Indeed there are other forms of wildlife which are now extinct. You may be surprised to know that there are already 41 species of wildlife extinct or now threatened with extinction in North America.

Ques.: When was the bald eagle adopted as our national emblem?

Ans.: The bald eagle was adopted as our national emblem by the Congress on June 20, 1782.

Ques.: Where can I obtain a license to hunt, fish, or trap in Virginia?

Ans.: Hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and permits are obtainable from the offices of the clerks of the circuit courts of the counties, and the corporation courts of the cities, and from other authorized agents of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. State forest permits can be obtained from Virginia Forest Service personnel. Hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses cannot be obtained from the Commission offices in Richmond.

Ques.: Where can I obtain conservation education materials for use in teaching my high school class?

Ans.: Such sources are numerous. In Virginia materials may be obtained from the following: Virginia Forest Service, Box 1368, Charlottesville, V. P. I. Extension Service, Blacksburg; State Water Control Board, Richmond; Commission of Fisheries, Gloucester Point; U. S. Forest Service, Harrisonburg; Department of Conservation and Development, Life Insurance Bldg., Richmond; U. S. Department of the Interior, Notional Park Service, 900 Lombardy, Richmond; and the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, 7 North Second Street, Richmond.

Ques.: How many species of fur bearers are to be found in the national forests of Virginia?

Ans.: Gray fox, red fox, opossum, wildcat, skunk, raccoon, weasel, and a few mink.

Ques.: I understand that Hog Island, in the lower James River, was trapped during this past season. What species of fur bearers were taken and approximately what number?

Ans.: Yes, the Hog Island marshes were trapped this season for muskrat, otter and raccoon. Few otter were taken, however, but about 2,000 muskrats and approximately 50 to 60 raccoons were trapped during the season.

Ques.: How can I distinguish a crane from a heron in flight?

Ans.: Easy. The crane extends its neck to its full length in flight, whereas, a heron crooks its neck. The heads of both are more or less bare, but the plumage of the crane is dense and compact and the plumage of the heron is loose. Few cranes are found east of the Mississippi, except along the Gulf Coast.

Eight Virginia—

Spring Wildflowers

KODACHROMES
by
SCALLY MAURICE



Pink Ladyslipper



Spring Beauty



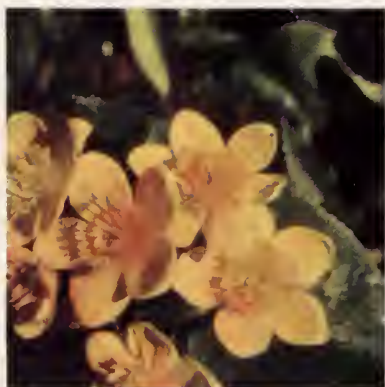
Hepatica



Atamasca Lily



Birdsfoot Violet



Marsh Marigold



Wild Strawberry



Bloodroot